

FEDERAL WORKER 2000 INITIATIVE

The three goals of the Federal Worker 2000 initiative are to:

- Goal 1** Reduce the total case rates for most Federal agencies by 3% per year, while at the same time increasing the timeliness of reporting new injuries and illnesses to ESA/OWCP for each agency by 5% per year.

Using the most recent injury and illness data, fiscal year 1997, as the "base" year, OSHA would develop annual goals of a 3% reduction per year for the Federal agencies. OSHA would encourage the establishment of active Health and Safety programs within each agency. Each year, OSHA would track and measure the agencies' progress toward the goal and provide them with feedback. The Federal Government average total case rate for FY 1997 was 5.63 injuries/illnesses per 100 employees. All agencies with a rate above 2.00 would be expected to reduce their rate in each subsequent year by 3%; agencies with rates below 2.00 would be expected to maintain their rates at the FY 1997 level.

At the same time, ESA/OWCP would track and measure agencies' progress toward the 5% improvement in timeliness from its 1997 baseline. Federal regulations require an employer to submit the written notice of an injury or illness (Forms CA-1 or CA-2) to ESA/OWCP as soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days (or 14 calendar days) after receiving it from the employee. ESA/OWCP is not able to take action to pay for medical care, take action to reduce disability, and effect a safe return to work until a notice of injury has been received. The later the notice, the more likelihood of prolonged disability and higher compensation costs.

Currently, the 14 largest agencies (including the Postal Service) are averaging 49% within the regulatory time period, with some agencies as low as 20%. All Federal agencies have access to their timeliness record through the ESA/OWCP World Wide Web page which tracks performance of the agencies down to the lowest organizational level for which cost data is compiled, and ESA/OWCP district offices provide this information to the Federal agencies regionally and nationally on a quarterly basis.

- Goal 2:** Reduce the lost time case rates for those worksites with the highest Federal lost time case rates by 10% per year.

For FY 1996, the lost time case rate for the Federal government was 2.67 lost time injuries/illnesses per 100 employees. Those worksites with twice this rate, as shown by FY 1996 data, would be the first asked to work toward this goal. Such worksites have the greatest potential for dramatic improvements, which in turn would represent compelling success stories for safety and health programs in the Federal government.

This goal will challenge Federal agencies with the highest lost time case rates to improve their safety and health programs and lower their injury rates. Preliminary lists of sites with the highest lost time case rates are currently being shared with the agencies. After

they have had an opportunity to review and comment on the data, OSHA will issue a final list of Federal worksites to be included under this goal.

OSHA will provide monitoring and technical assistance necessary to increase agency emphasis on accident prevention. ESA/OWCP will work with the agencies to assure that prompt medical attention is provided to employees who experience accidents.

Goal 3: Following establishment of a baseline in FY 1999 or 2000, reduce the lost production days rate (lost days due to injury or illness per 100 employees) by 2% per year.

Society, the individual worker and employers all benefit from avoiding injuries in the first place, or failing that, from avoiding long separations from work, lost productivity, and lost self-esteem that can result from long-term disability related to on-the-job injuries. Lost production days is a balanced measure of the impact of workplace hazards, capturing both its human and cost dimensions. The goal can be accomplished both by reducing injuries or by lessening their severity or their average length-of disability; it focuses agency attention on the areas where they have the most capacity to effect improvements.

Agency management and employee representatives can address overall safety and accident prevention issues, as well as increasing return to work and light duty accommodation efforts once injuries/illnesses are incurred. The goal requires close cooperation between OSHA and ESA/OWCP staff, as well as the Federal agency staff who interact with one or the other or both, and hence works to eliminate overlap and duplication of efforts that can currently occur.

To ensure that lost-production days are correctly identified, and that there is an accurate measure for determining achievement of these goals, agencies will need to establish systems to identify and report all time lost due to job-related injuries. Currently, ESA/OWCP has statistical data on the performance by agencies after the initial 45 days during which employees remain on the agency's payroll (COP period), but does not capture information on the number of days lost during the COP period. Continuation of Pay (COP) is a hidden cost of the workers' compensation program, not only in dollars but in lost days of production. Since most injured Federal workers return to work before the 45 day COP period expires, the new tracking system will yield valuable information, and will provide an additional incentive for Federal agencies to improve the timeliness of their notification of DOL when injuries occur. ESA/OWCP will provide agencies with technical assistance and guidance in capturing the information, thereby providing the tool needed to measure each agency's success in reducing the lost production days rate by 2% beginning in FY 2000 or 2001.